AMAR CHITRA KATHA

AKBAR

A VISIONARY MONARCH

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AKBAR

IN THE YEAR 1556, AKBAR WAS JUST THIRTEEN YEARS OLD. YET HIS MILITARY TRAINING HAD ALREADY BEGUN. HIS FATHER, HUMAYUN, THE MUGHAL EMPEROR, HAD SENT HIM WITH HIS FAITHFUL GENERAL, BAIRAM KHAN, TO FIGHT IN PUNJAB AGAINST THEIR ENEMY, SIKANDAR SHAH.

IT WAS AN ACCIDENT. HE FELL FROM THE STEEP STONE STEPS OF HIS LIBRARY AND WAS INJURED....
WE SHOULD CROWN YOU AT ONCE, AKBAR, LEST SOME RIVAL SHOULD MAKE A CLAIM ON THE MUGHAL THRONE.

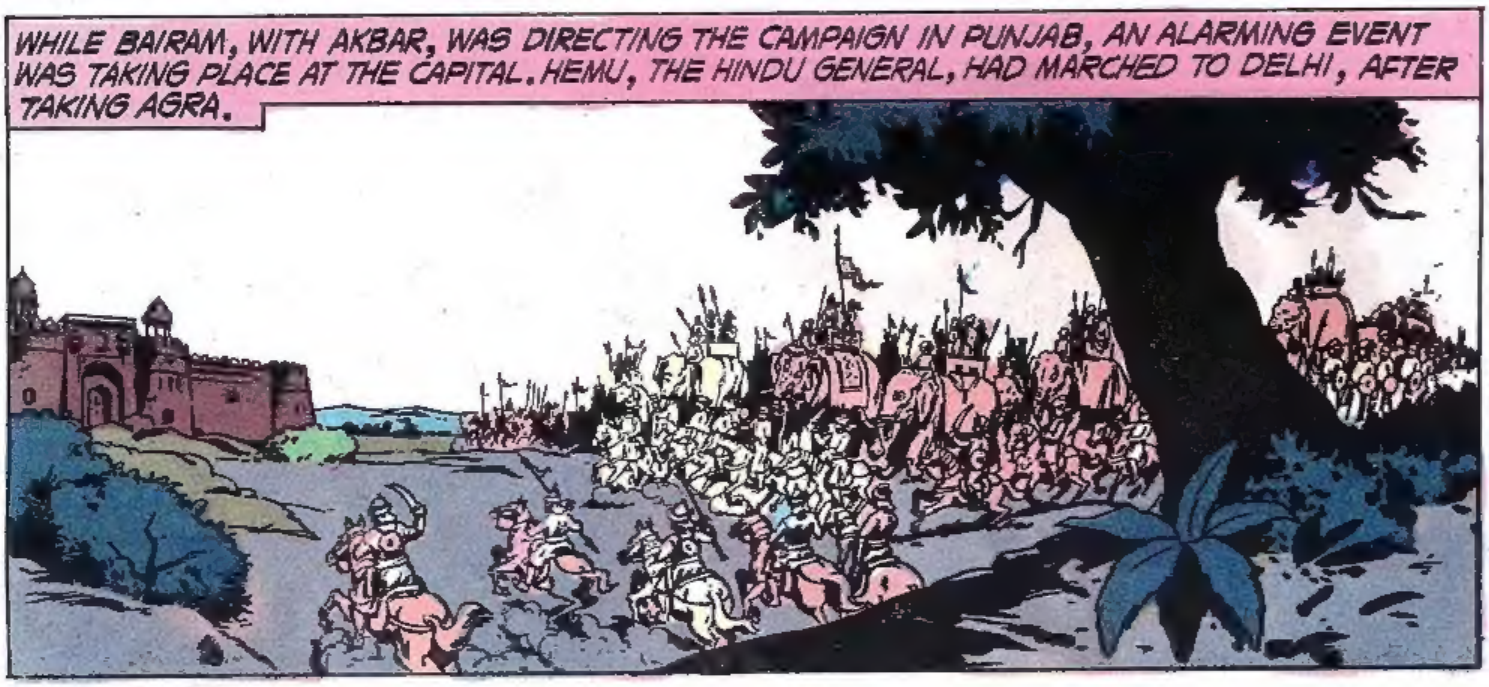
AKBAR WAS HASTILY CROWNED IN AN OPEN FIELD IN KALANAUR IN PUNJAB.
YOU ARE EMPEROR NOW. ALWAYS REMEMBER YOUR DUTIES TO YOUR PEOPLE....
THIS I DO SOLEMNLY PROMISE....

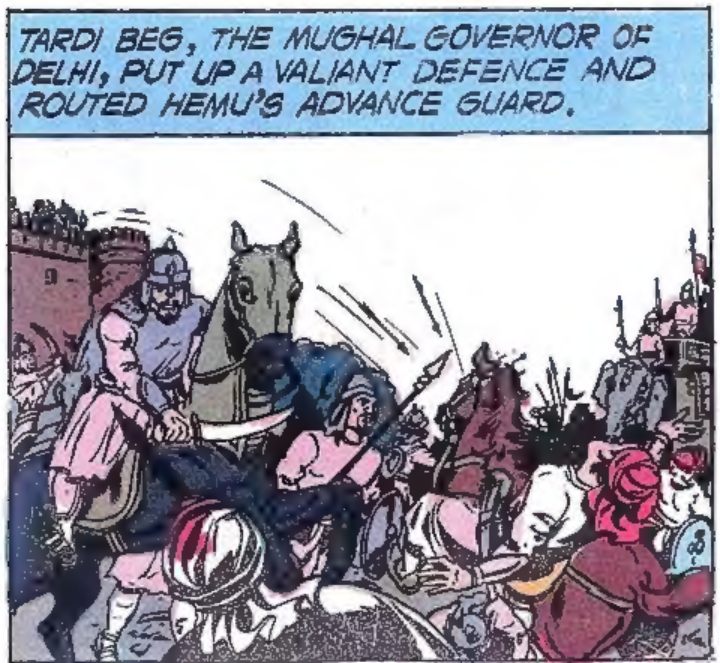
BUT AKBAR WAS STILL A CHILD. HE BROODED OVER HIS FATHER'S DEATH, AND THE HEAVY WEIGHT OF KINGSHIP.
MY CHILD, WHY ARE YOU WEEPING? COME, BE BRAVE....
BAIRAM, MY FATHER WENT MANY TIMES INTO EXILE. I HAVE KNOWN MANY SEPARATIONS. BUT NOW HE HAS LEFT ME FOR EVER!

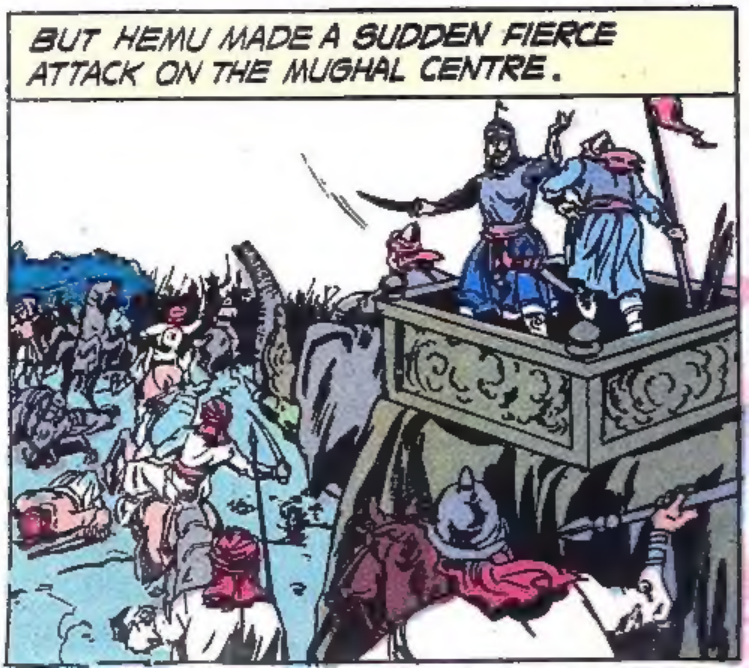
BUT YOU ARE THE RULER NOW, AKBAR. THINK OF THE HONOUR—
HONOUR! YOU FORGET THE WORRIES. I DON'T WANT TO RULE. I WANT TO BE FREE!

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO DO INSTEAD?
RIDE ELEPHANTS, HUNT TIGERS! GO WHERE I PLEASE, TO THE FORESTS OR BAZAARS.

WHAT A CHILD YOU ARE! ALL RIGHT, I WILL LOOK AFTER THINGS FOR YOU. CAN YOU TRUST ME?
LIKE A FATHER! BAIRAM, WHAT WOULD I DO WITHOUT YOU?


WHILE BAIRAM, WITH AKBAR, WAS DIRECTING THE CAMPAIGN IN PUNJAB, AN ALARMING EVENT WAS TAKING PLACE AT THE CAPITAL. HEMU, THE HINDU GENERAL, HAD MARCHED TO DELHI, AFTER TAKING AGRA.


TARDI BEG, THE MUGHAL GOVERNOR OF DELHI, PUT UP A VALIANT DEFENCE AND ROUTED HEMU'S ADVANCE GUARD.


BUT HEMU MADE A SUDDEN FIERCE ATTACK ON THE MUGHAL CENTRE.

TARDI BEG PANICKED.

WE CANNOT HOLD OUT ANY LONGER. WE WILL HAVE TO LEAVE DELHI TO THE ENEMY. BUT AT LEAST LET ME SAVE HUMAYUN'S TREASURE FOR AKBAR.

HE FLED, TAKING THE TREASURE WITH HIM.

DELHI FELL TO THE INVADERS. HEMU ENTERED IN TRIUMPH.

JAI!

JAI!

THERE WAS NO RESISTANCE IN THE CAPITAL. HEMU WAS GIVEN A GRAND WELCOME AND A BIG TITLE—

RAJA VIKRAMADITYA KI JAI!

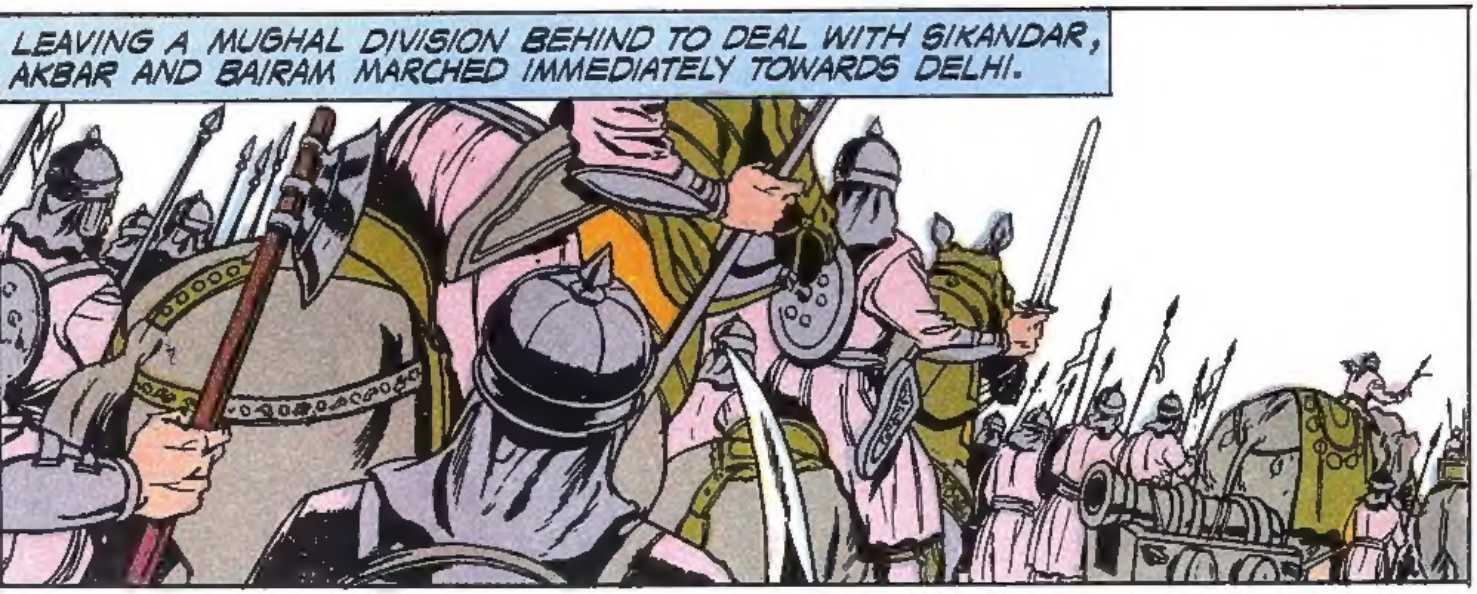
THE NEWS OF TARDI BEG'S IGNOBLE FLIGHT REACHED BAIRAM AND AKBAR AT JULLUNDUR IN PUNJAB.

MY LORD, TARDI BEG HAS FLED FROM DELHI AT HEMU'S APPROACH. HEMU HAS PROCLAIMED HIMSELF KING!

TARDI BEG IS A COWARD. HE WILL PAY FOR THIS!

HEMU IS REALLY VERY POWERFUL. WE CAN'T FIGHT HIM NOW. WE ARE NOT PREPARED.
THEN WHY DON'T WE RETREAT TO KABUL FOR THE TIME BEING, TILL IT IS SAFE TO RETURN?

NO! WE MUST ATTACK HIM AT ONCE! WE CANNOT ALLOW HEMU TO RULE DELHI!
I AGREE WITH YOU, BAIRAM.


LEAVING A MUGHAL DIVISION BEHIND TO DEAL WITH SIKANDAR, AKBAR AND BAIRAM MARCHED IMMEDIATELY TOWARDS DELHI.

ON THE WAY THEY WERE JOINED BY TARDI BEG.
I AM GLAD TO SEE YOU, TARDI BEG!
AKBAR GREETS TARDI BEG AS A FRIEND THOUGH HE HAS DELIVERED OUR CAPITAL INTO THE ENEMY'S HANDS.

GREETINGS, AKBAR! WE WERE FORCED TO LEAVE DELHI, BUT I HAVE THE TREASURE SAFELY HERE.
GOOD WORK, TARDI!

AND HE GETS PRAISED, TOO! I MUST GET RID OF TARDI! AKBAR DOESN'T REALISE TARDI IS A DOLT!
AND BAIRAM GAVE ORDERS TO EXECUTE TARDI.

THE ARMIES OF AKBAR AND HEMU MET AT PANIPAT. IT WAS AT PANIPAT THAT BABUR, AKBAR'S GRANDFATHER, HAD WON HIS FIRST GREAT BATTLE IN HINDUSTAN.

PREPARE FOR BATTLE!

HEY, THERE, LOOK SHARP WITH THAT CANNON!

HEMU HAD A HUGE CAVALRY OF 50,000, WITH 1500 ELEPHANTS. THE MUGHALS HAD HALF THAT NUMBER OF CAVALRY. IT WAS GOING HARD FOR THE MUGHALS....

BOOM

ZING

HEMU WAS ELATED.

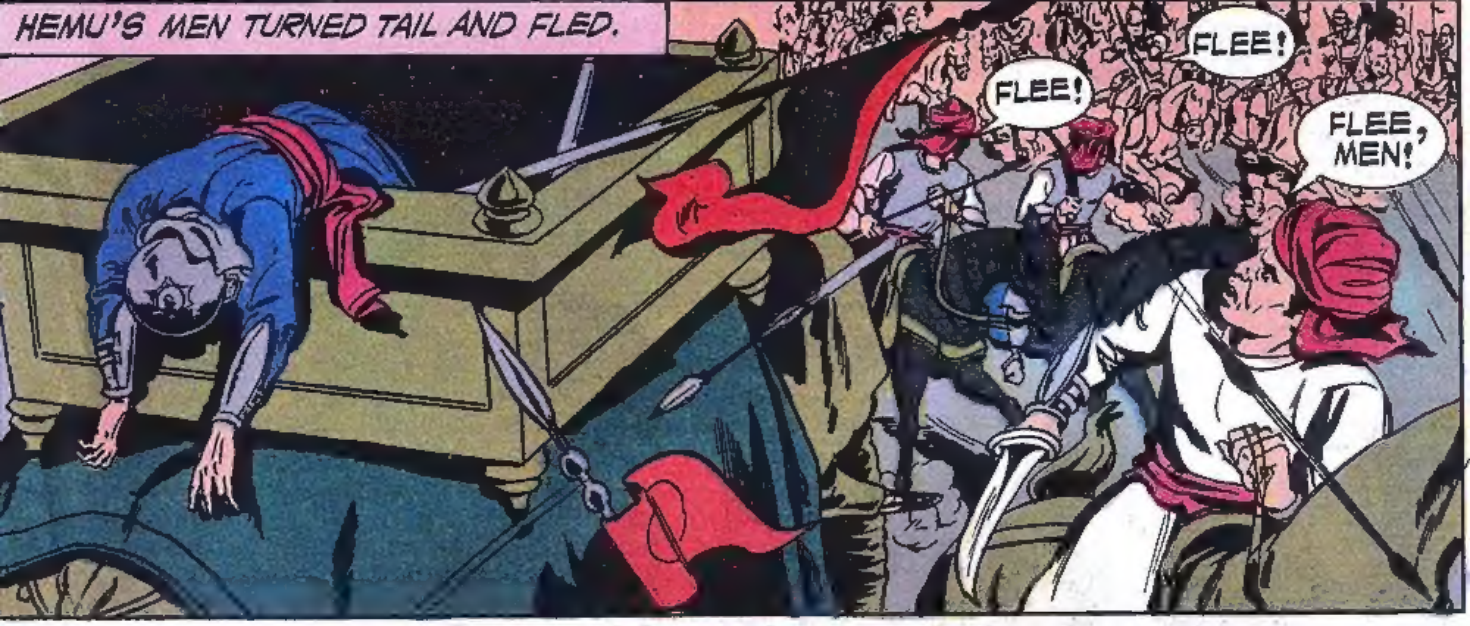
VICTORY IS IN SIGHT!

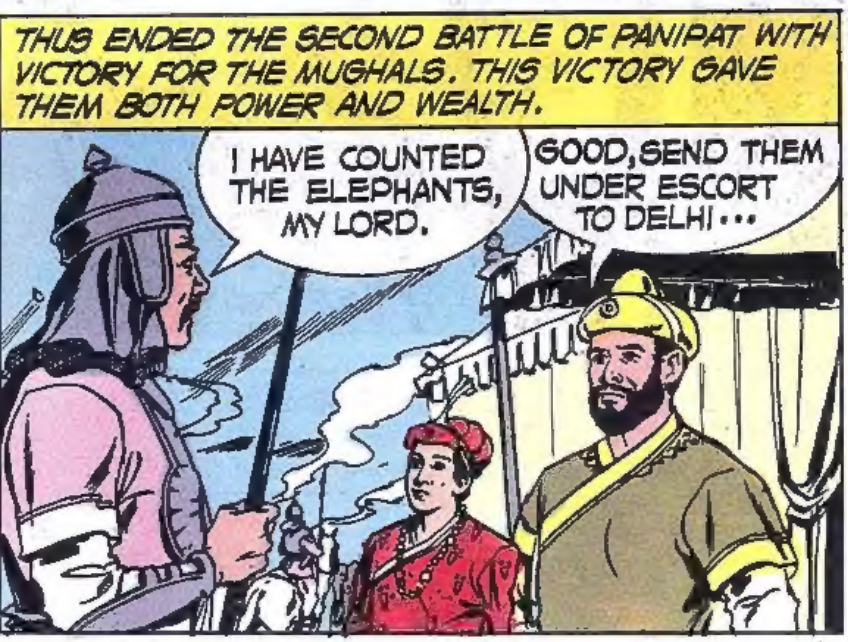
BUT SUDDENLY—

AAH!

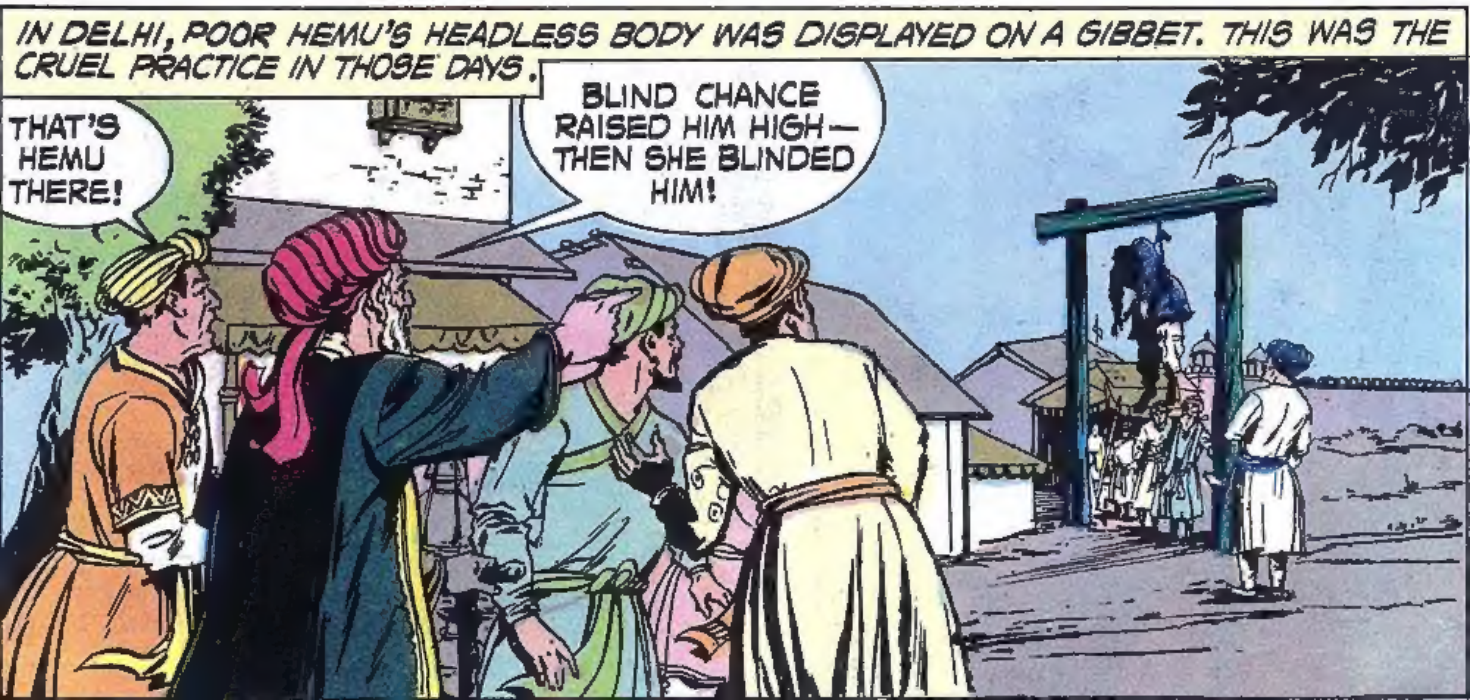
HAI! OUR RAJA HAS BEEN HIT!

AN ARROW HAS STRUCK HIS EYE!


HEMU'S MEN TURNED TAIL AND FLED.
FLEE!
FLEE!
FLEE, MEN!

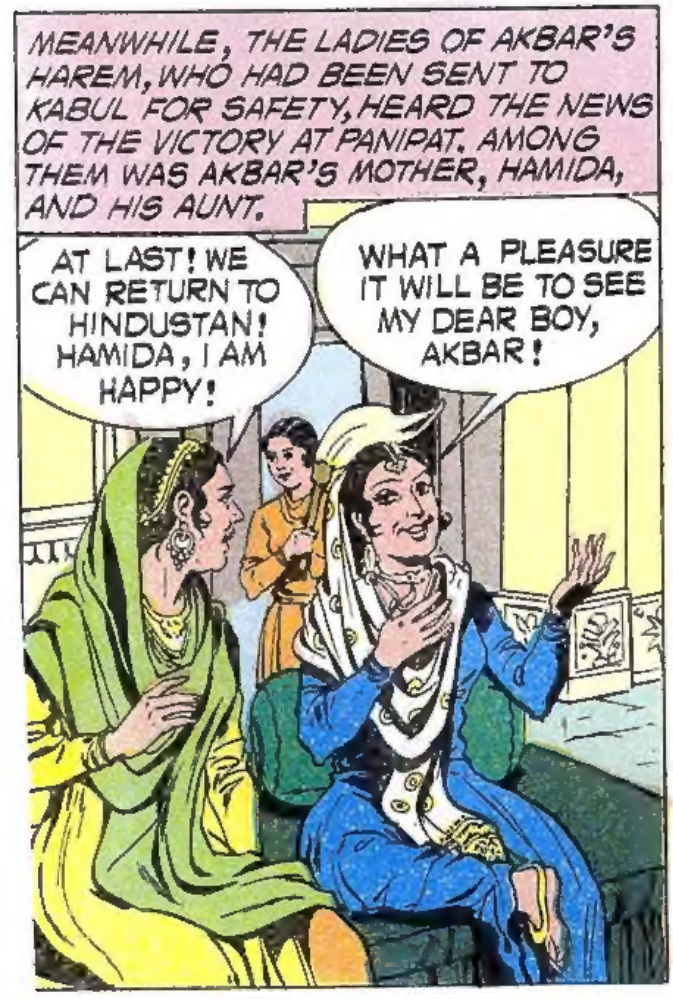

THUS ENDED THE SECOND BATTLE OF PANIPAT WITH VICTORY FOR THE MUGHALS. THIS VICTORY GAVE THEM BOTH POWER AND WEALTH.
I HAVE COUNTED THE ELEPHANTS, MY LORD.
GOOD, SEND THEM UNDER ESCORT TO DELHI...

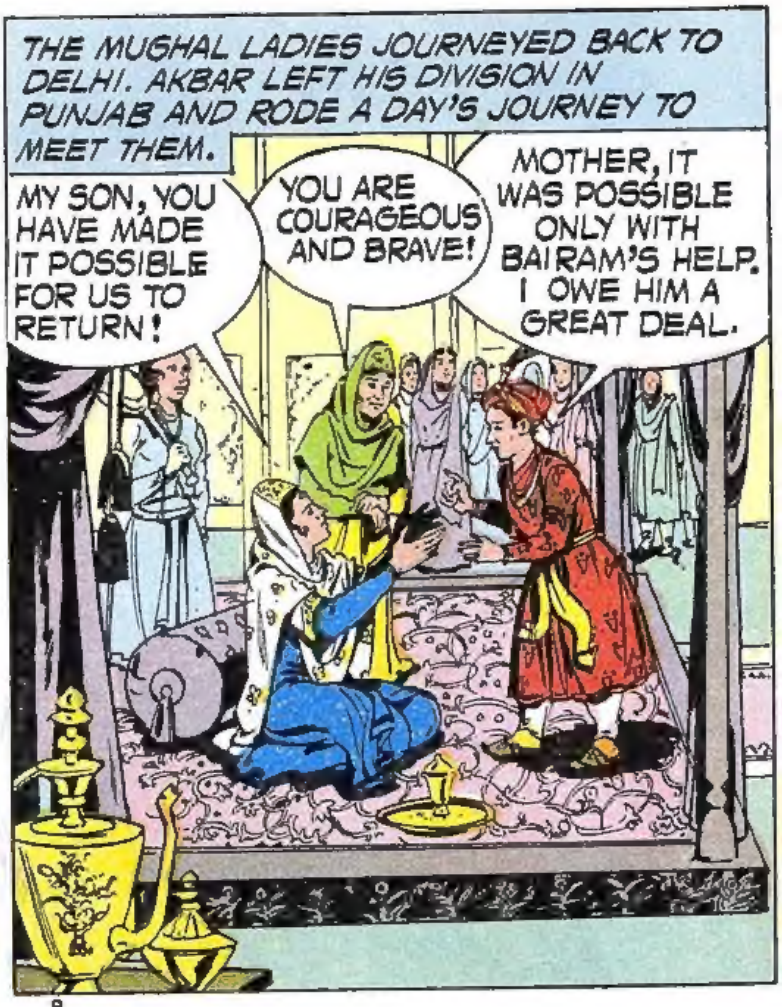
... WE WILL FOLLOW WITH THE ARMY TOMORROW.


IN DELHI, POOR HEMU'S HEADLESS BODY WAS DISPLAYED ON A GIBBET. THIS WAS THE CRUEL PRACTICE IN THOSE DAYS.
THAT'S HEMU THERE!
BLIND CHANCE RAISED HIM HIGH— THEN SHE BLINDED HIM!

AFTER THE VICTORY, AKBAR AND BAIRAM RETURNED TO PUNJAB TO RESUME THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST SIKANDAR SHAH. ON THE WAY THEY MET A MUGHAL COMMANDER FROM PUNJAB.
WE ARE GLAD TO SEE YOU. THINGS ARE BAD HERE. SIKANDAR HAS DRIVEN BACK OUR ARMY TO LAHORE AND...

...WORSE STILL, HE HAS BEGUN TO COLLECT TAXES.
WE MUST VANQUISH SIKANDAR ONCE AND FOR ALL. AGREED, AKBAR?
AGREED!


MEANWHILE, THE LADIES OF AKBAR'S HAREM, WHO HAD BEEN SENT TO KABUL FOR SAFETY, HEARD THE NEWS OF THE VICTORY AT PANIPAT. AMONG THEM WAS AKBAR'S MOTHER, HAMIDA, AND HIS AUNT.
AT LAST! WE CAN RETURN TO HINDUSTAN! HAMIDA, I AM HAPPY!
WHAT A PLEASURE IT WILL BE TO SEE MY DEAR BOY, AKBAR!


THE MUGHAL LADIES JOURNEYED BACK TO DELHI. AKBAR LEFT HIS DIVISION IN PUNJAB AND RODE A DAY'S JOURNEY TO MEET THEM.
MY SON, YOU HAVE MADE IT POSSIBLE FOR US TO RETURN!
YOU ARE COURAGEOUS AND BRAVE!
MOTHER, IT WAS POSSIBLE ONLY WITH BAIRAM'S HELP. I OWE HIM A GREAT DEAL.

AKBAR RETURNED TO THE CAMPAIGN. THE MUGHAL ARMY NOW HAD THE UPPER HAND AND SIKANDAR HAD RETREATED INTO THE FORT AT MANKOT.

UNDER BAIRAM'S ABLE GUIDANCE, THE MUGHALS LAID SIEGE TO THE FORT AT MANKOT, BUT SIKANDAR HELD OUT FOR SIX LONG MONTHS.

SIKANDAR CANNOT HOPE TO WIN. WHY DOESN'T HE GIVE IN?

HE KNOWS WE ARE BEING TROUBLED BY THE AFGHANS LED BY ADIL SHAH.

SO HE IS HOPING SOME OF OUR DIVISIONS WILL BE CALLED TO OTHER AREAS?

EXACTLY! YOU ARE LEARNING FAST, AKBAR!

BUT SOON AFTER, THERE WAS GOOD NEWS FROM BENGAL—

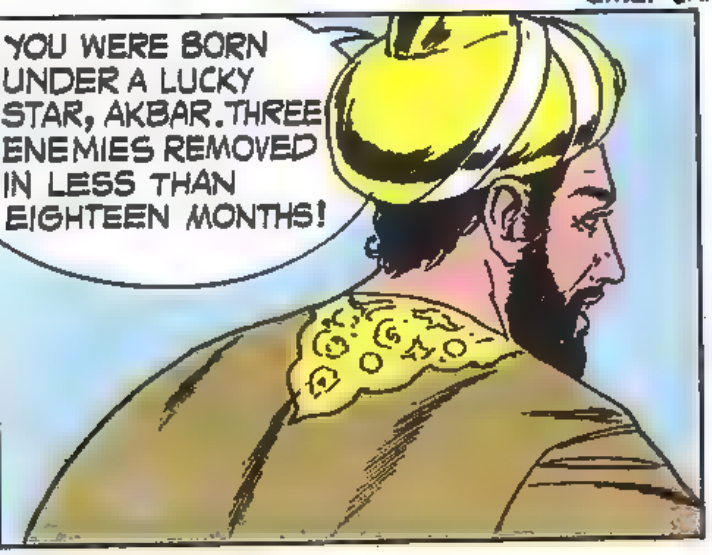
ADIL SHAH HAS BEEN KILLED!

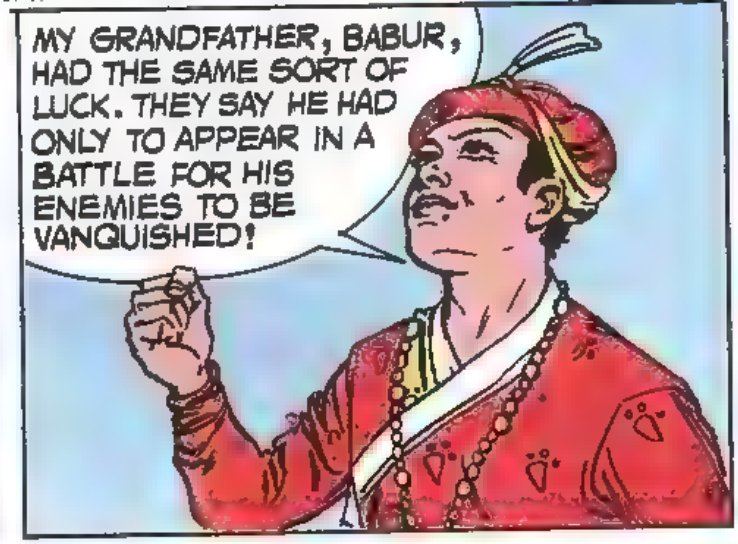
THAT WAS THE AFGHAN UPSTART WHO SAID HE HAD A CLAIM ON DELHI!

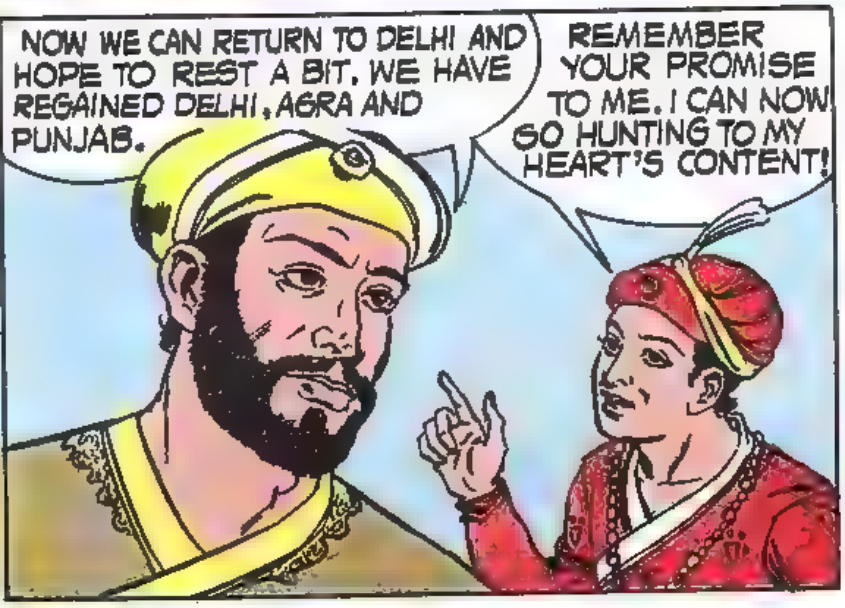
SOME TIME LATER—

SIKANDAR HAS AGREED TO A TRUCE. IN RETURN, WE WILL SPARE HIS LIFE AND GIVE HIM A GRANT OF LAND.

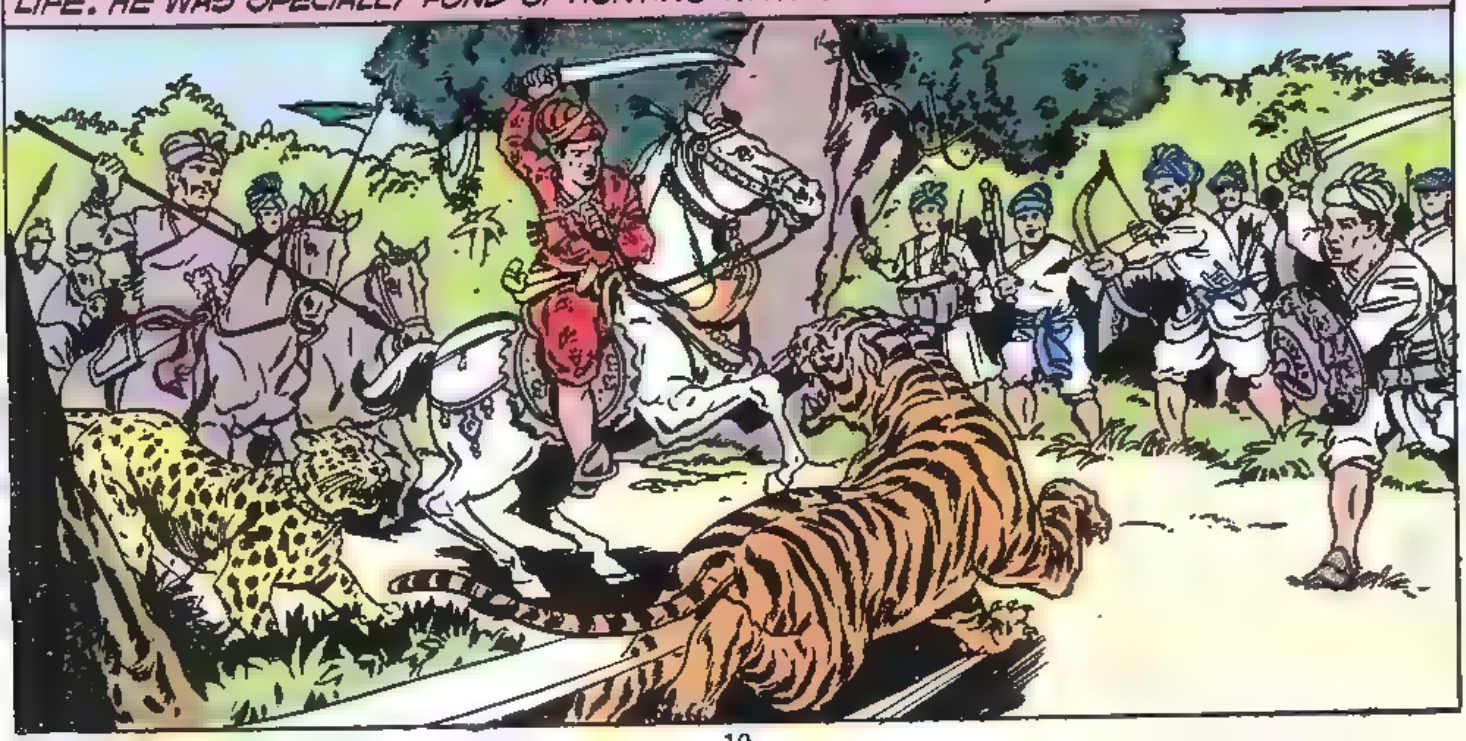
WE OWE THIS SUCCESS TO YOU, BAIRAM.







LEAVING THE HEAVY CARES OF STATE TO BAIRAM, AKBAR NOW LED A PLEASURE-FILLED LIFE. HE WAS SPECIALLY FOND OF HUNTING WITH CHEETAHS, A VERY BLOODTHIRSTY SPORT.



HE TOOK GREAT PLEASURE IN THE DANGEROUS GAME OF RIDING ON ELEPHANTS DURING AN ELEPHANT FIGHT.

HAS THE PRINCE GONE MAD? HE WILL BE HURT!

NO, HE IS A MASTER AT THIS GAME!

HE IS A REAL DARE-DEVIL!

BAIRAM WAS EFFICIENT. IN FOUR YEARS HE HAD SUBDUED ALL MAJOR ENEMIES. BUT HIS SUCCESS HAD MADE HIM ARROGANT, EVEN TOWARDS THE EMPEROR. HE BEGAN TO DISREGARD AKBAR'S ORDERS AND DID NOT CONSULT HIM ON STATE AFFAIRS. ONE DAY—

BAIRAM IS UNWELL, I MUST VISIT HIM. SEND A MESSENGER TO TELL HIM I AM COMING.

BUT THE MESSENGER RETURNED SOON—

MY LORD, BAIRAM DOES NOT WANT TO SEE YOU NOW. HE SAYS HE IS TOO UNWELL TO RECEIVE VISITORS.

AKBAR WAS UPSET.
SUCH DISCOURTESY IS UNTHINKABLE. I AM NOT A CHILD ANY MORE!
HE WOULD NOT HAVE TREATED YOU LIKE THAT IF TARDI BEG HAD BEEN AROUND!
THE SPEAKER WAS SHAMS-UD-DIN, THE HUSBAND OF AKBAR'S WET NURSE.
POOR, GENTLE, TARDI DIED DURING OUR CAMPAIGN IN PUNJAB, SHAMS-UD-DIN.
MY LORD, TARDI BEG HAD BEEN PUT TO DEATH!
WHAT! BY WHOSE ORDERS?
BAIRAM KHAN GAVE THE ORDER.
I SEE....
THEY SAY BAIRAM WAS JEALOUS OF TARDI BEG BECAUSE YOU LIKED HIM.
I MUST SEE BAIRAM ABOUT THIS.
A FEW DAYS LATER AT THE PALACE —
YOU LOOK UN-HAPPY, AKBAR.
YES, I AM! TARDI BEG, YOU KNOW, WAS A LOYAL FRIEND AND YOU ORDERED HIS DEATH.

AKBAR, A RULER CANNOT HAVE WEAK MEN AROUND HIM. TARDI WAS A COWARD. HE GAVE UP DELHI TOO QUICKLY. HE HAD TO BE PUNISHED.
BUT HE WAS QUITE HONEST. HE SAVED THE IMPERIAL TREASURE FOR ME.
BUT SUPPOSE WE HAD LOST DELHI, AND FLED TO KABUL? OF WHAT USE WOULD THE TREASURE HAVE BEEN THEN?
BUT YOU COULD HAVE CONSULTED ME. YOU KNEW I CARED A GREAT DEAL FOR TARDI BEG.
THIS IS JUST A TRIFLING MATTER. THERE ARE SO MANY OTHER PRESSING THINGS TO WORRY ABOUT....
KNOW YOU WORK HARD, BAIRAM.
AND YOU KNOW MY LOYALTY AND AFFECTION IS LIMITLESS....
AND SO THEY WERE RECONCILED.

BUT AKBAR WAS FAST GROWING UP AND WANTED TO WIELD MORE AUTHORITY. BECAUSE OF BAIRAM'S ARROGANCE, THERE WAS ALSO A FEELING OF DISCONTENT IN THE COURT. A FEW YEARS LATER—

WHY SHOULD WE LET BAIRAM LORD IT OVER US LIKE THIS?

WE SHOULD SPEAK TO AKBAR ABOUT HIM.

MAHAM ANGA SPOKE UP BEFORE THE REST. SHE HAD BEEN AKBAR'S NURSE AND WAS MUCH RESPECTED IN COURT.

AKBAR, MY CHILD, YOU KNOW EVERYONE IS SAYING THAT BAIRAM IS BECOMING A GRAND PASHA. HE SPENDS MORE MONEY THAN YOU DO—AND HE'S SO OVERBEARING!

I, TOO, HAVE KNOWN IT FOR SOME TIME. BUT I OWE BAIRAM SO MUCH, I CAN'T CHIDE HIM.

DON'T CHIDE HIM, MY DEAR. JUST SEND HIM AWAY ON A PILGRIMAGE TO MECCA. YOU'LL BE DOING HIS SOUL SOME GOOD!

YES, THAT'S AN HONOURABLE WAY TO GET RID OF HIM....

MAHAM HAD HER OWN REASONS FOR WISHING TO GET RID OF BAIRAM. SHE HAD A SON, ADHAM KHAN, FOR WHOM SHE HAD AMBITIONS.

OH! HERE IS ADHAM. NOW, HE'S A MAN YOU CAN RELY ON TO CARRY OUT YOUR WISHES.

BAIRAM KHAN WAS SENT AWAY ON A PILGRIMAGE. AKBAR BEGAN TO RELY HEAVILY ON MAHAM AND ADHAM KHAN.

ADHAM, I WANT YOU TO GO TO MALWA AND FIGHT BAZ BAHADUR. HE HAS BEEN TROUBLESOME LATELY.

WITH PLEASURE, AKBAR.

LATER ADHAM DISCUSSED IT WITH HIS MOTHER.

AKBAR WANTS ME TO GO TO MALWA TO FIGHT. WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THAT, MOTHER?

GOOD! BAZ BAHADUR WILL BE EASY TO CONQUER. ALL HE IS INTERESTED IN IS MUSIC...

...AND THEY SAY HE IS VERY WEALTHY AND HAS MANY WOMEN IN HIS HAREM.

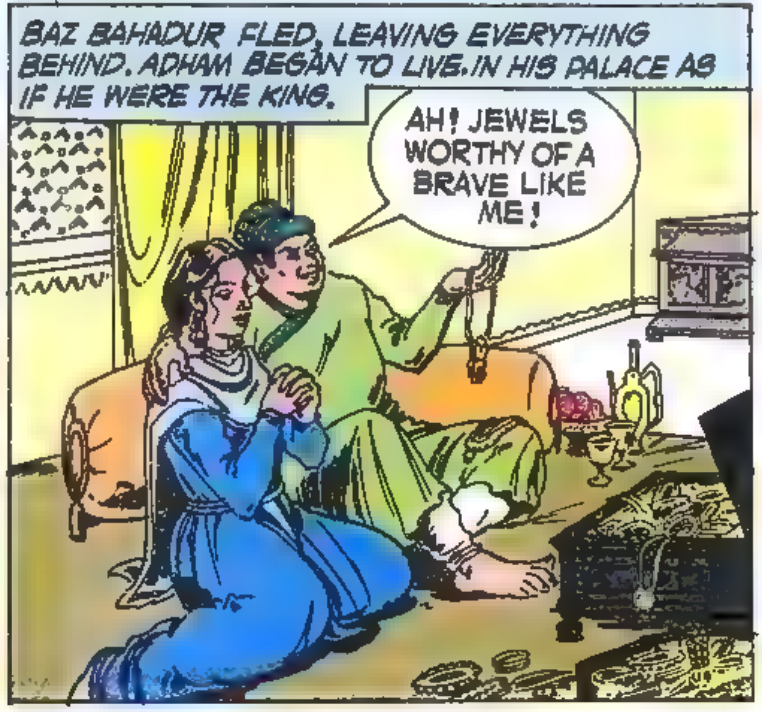
SO IN ONE FELL SWOOP I WILL TAKE BAZ BAHADUR, HIS WOMEN AND HIS WEALTH. HA! HA! HA!

AS WAS EXPECTED, THE BATTLE WAS A BRIEF ONE WHICH THE MUGHALS WON. ADHAM KHAN TREATED THE VICTIMS CRUELLY. HE MASSACRED INNOCENT CITIZENS, BOTH HINDUS AND MUSLIMS.

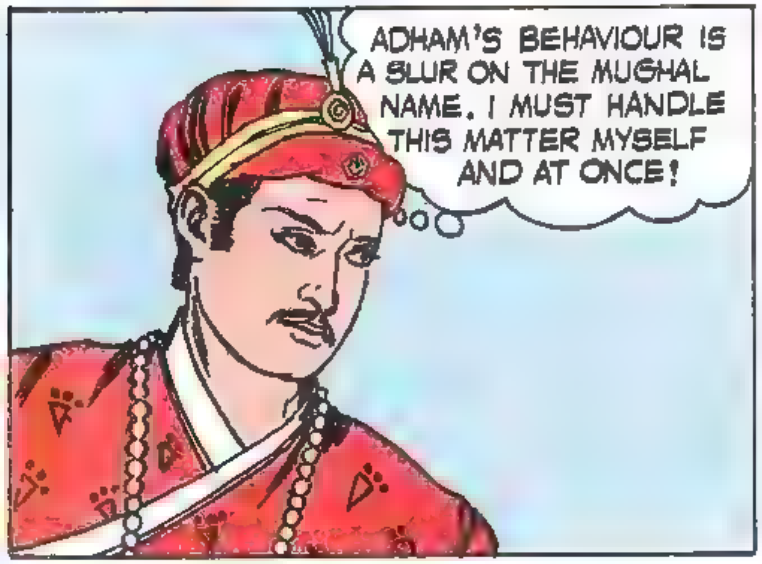
LOOK AT THAT MAN SHIVERING THERE!

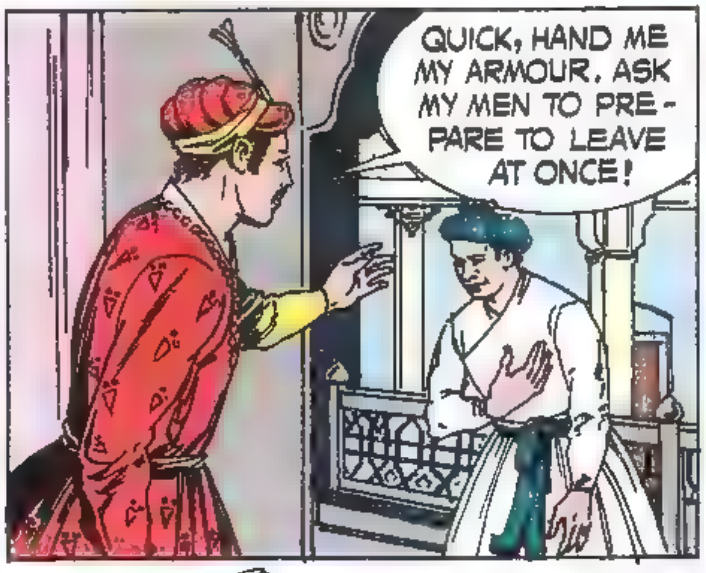
HEY YOU, GET A MOVE ON!

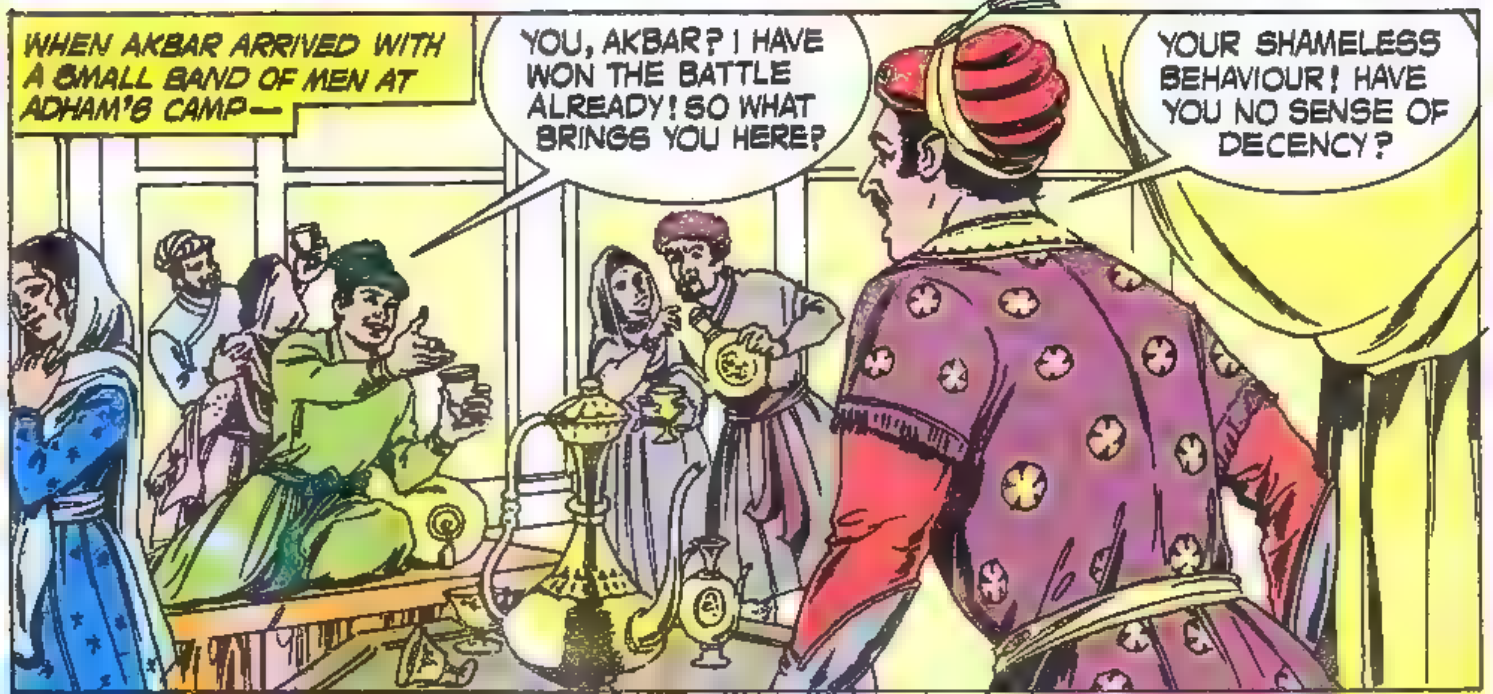
HA! HA! WHAT A TREAT THIS SIGHT IS!

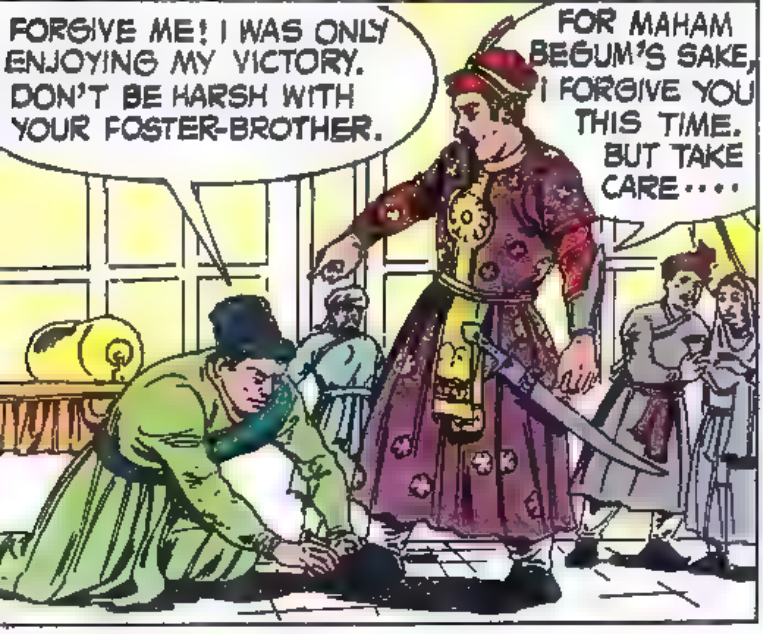

BAZ BAHADUR FLED, LEAVING EVERYTHING BEHIND. ADHAM BEGAN TO LIVE IN HIS PALACE AS IF HE WERE THE KING.
AH! JEWELS WORTHY OF A BRAVE LIKE ME!

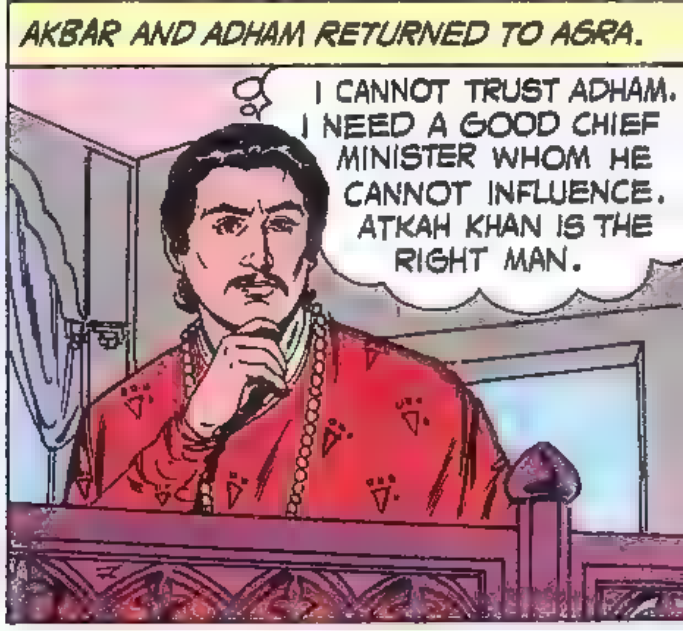
SOON THE NEWS OF ADHAM'S ACTIVITIES REACHED AKBAR.
ADHAM HAS KEPT ALL BAZ BAHADUR'S WEALTH FOR HIMSELF.
HE HAS PUT TO DEATH INNOCENT PERSONS, EVEN HOLY MEN WITH KORANS IN THEIR HANDS!

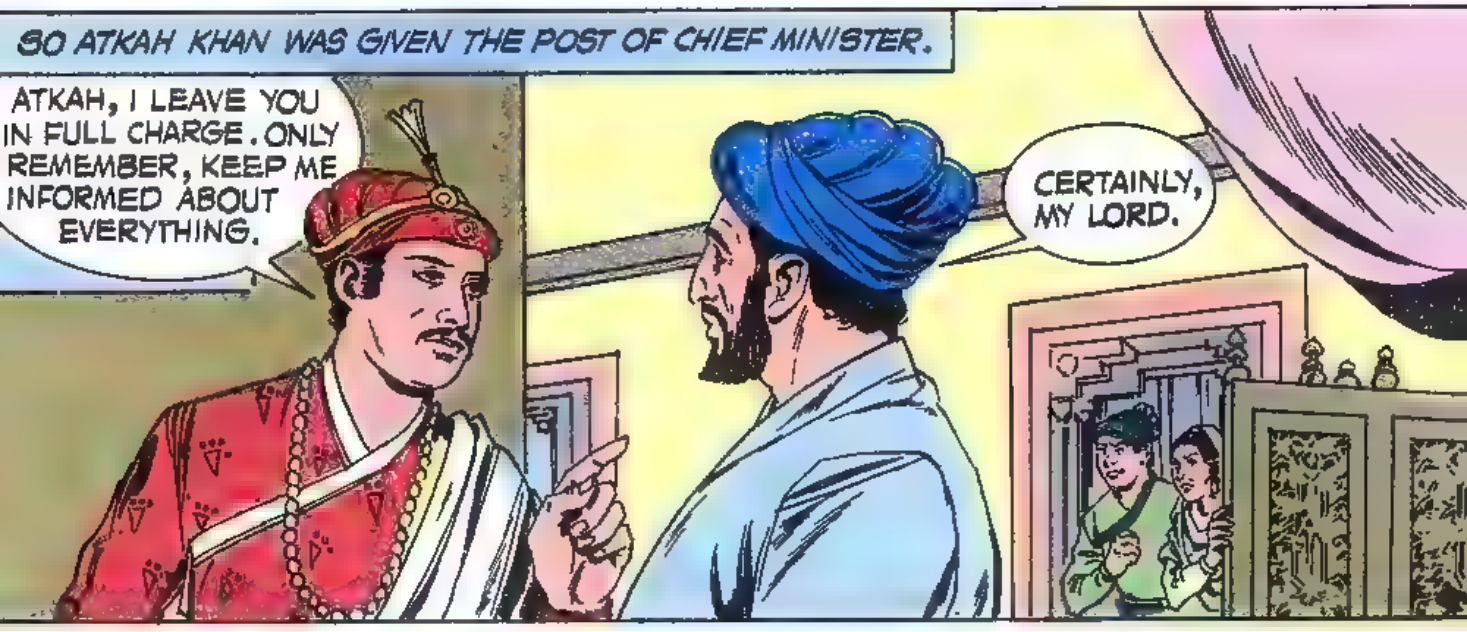

ADHAM'S BEHAVIOUR IS A SLUR ON THE MUGHAL NAME. I MUST HANDLE THIS MATTER MYSELF AND AT ONCE!

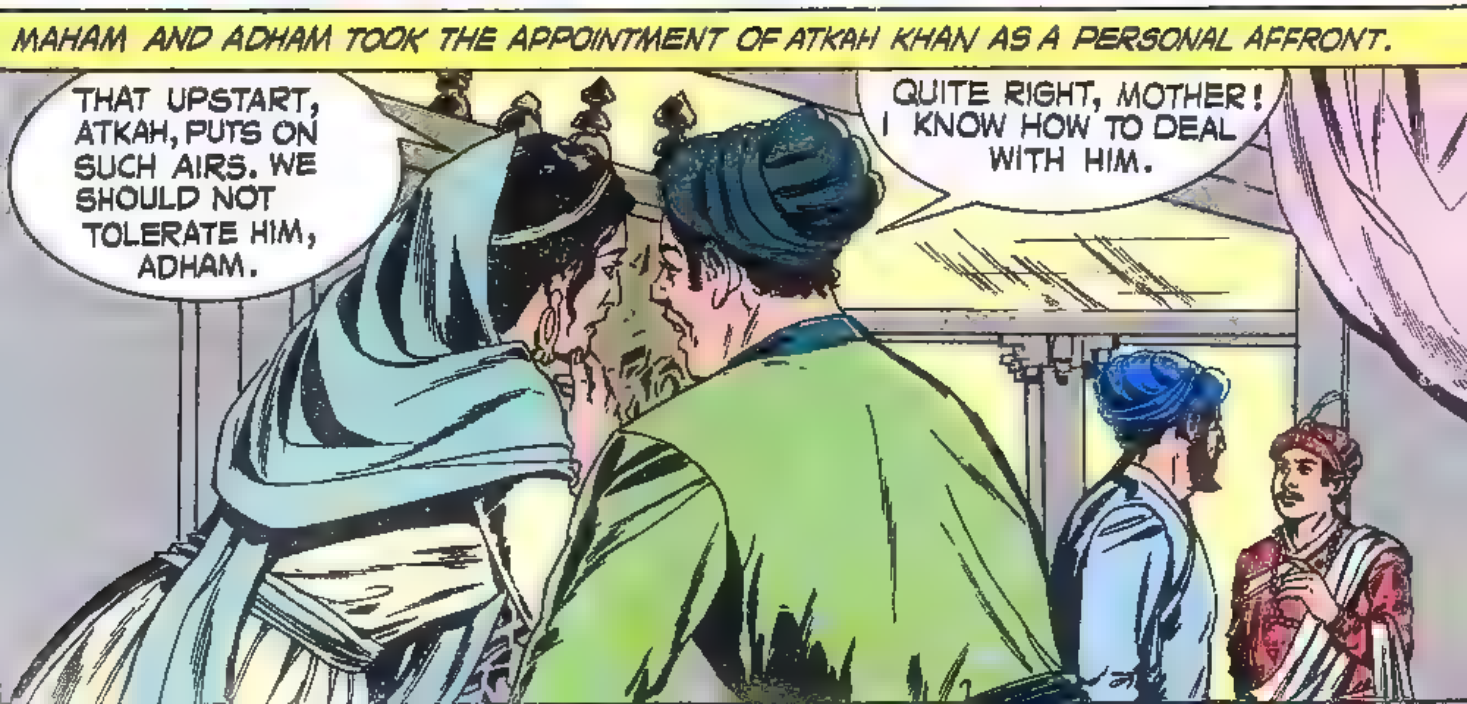

QUICK, HAND ME MY ARMOUR. ASK MY MEN TO PREPARE TO LEAVE AT ONCE!


WHEN AKBAR ARRIVED WITH A SMALL BAND OF MEN AT ADHAM'S CAMP—
YOU, AKBAR? I HAVE WON THE BATTLE ALREADY! SO WHAT BRINGS YOU HERE?
YOUR SHAMELESS BEHAVIOUR! HAVE YOU NO SENSE OF DECENCY?


FORGIVE ME! I WAS ONLY ENJOYING MY VICTORY. DON'T BE HARSH WITH YOUR FOSTER-BROTHER.
FOR MAHAM BEGUM'S SAKE, I FORGIVE YOU THIS TIME. BUT TAKE CARE....


AKBAR AND ADHAM RETURNED TO AGRA.
I CANNOT TRUST ADHAM. I NEED A GOOD CHIEF MINISTER WHOM HE CANNOT INFLUENCE. ATKAH KHAN IS THE RIGHT MAN.


SO ATKAH KHAN WAS GIVEN THE POST OF CHIEF MINISTER.
ATKAH, I LEAVE YOU IN FULL CHARGE. ONLY REMEMBER, KEEP ME INFORMED ABOUT EVERYTHING.
CERTAINLY, MY LORD.


MAHAM AND ADHAM TOOK THE APPOINTMENT OF ATKAH KHAN AS A PERSONAL AFFRONT.
THAT UPSTART, ATKAH, PUTS ON SUCH AIRS. WE SHOULD NOT TOLERATE HIM, ADHAM.
QUITE RIGHT, MOTHER! I KNOW HOW TO DEAL WITH HIM.

ONE DAY ATKAH KHAN WAS BUSY WITH STATE AFFAIRS IN A PUBLIC HALL IN THE PALACE, WHEN ADHAM KHAN SUDDENLY APPEARED WITH ARMED MEN.
THAT'S THE MAN. DISPATCH HIM!
ARRHH!
JUST THEN AKBAR APPEARED AT THE DOORWAY.
AKBAR! IT'S YOU!
YOU SCOUNDREL! YOU HAVE KILLED MY MINISTER!
AH!
TAKE ADHAM AWAY AND THROW HIM OVER THE PARAPET!
THE GUARDS LIFTED THE UNCONSCIOUS ADHAM AND THREW HIM OVER THE PARAPET.
ADHAM DID NOT DIE THE FIRST TIME. HE HAD TO BE DRAGGED UP AND THROWN DOWN A SECOND TIME.

THIS EPISODE LEFT AN UNPLEASANT IMPRESSION ON AKBAR. ONE DAY WHILE HE WAS OUT HUNTING, HE PONDERED OVER THE PAST.

IS IT POSSIBLE TO RULE AND YET AVOID BEING RUTHLESS?

I BANISHED BAIRAM AND SENT MY FOSTER-BROTHER, ADHAM, TO HIS DEATH....

AND NOW THIS MINDLESS SLAUGHTER OF ANIMALS! EVEN A WILD BEAST KILLS ONLY OUT OF NECESSITY....

AND AKBAR FELL INTO A SWOON.

BUT AKBAR CONTINUED HIS HUNTING EXPEDITIONS FOR POLITICAL REASONS.

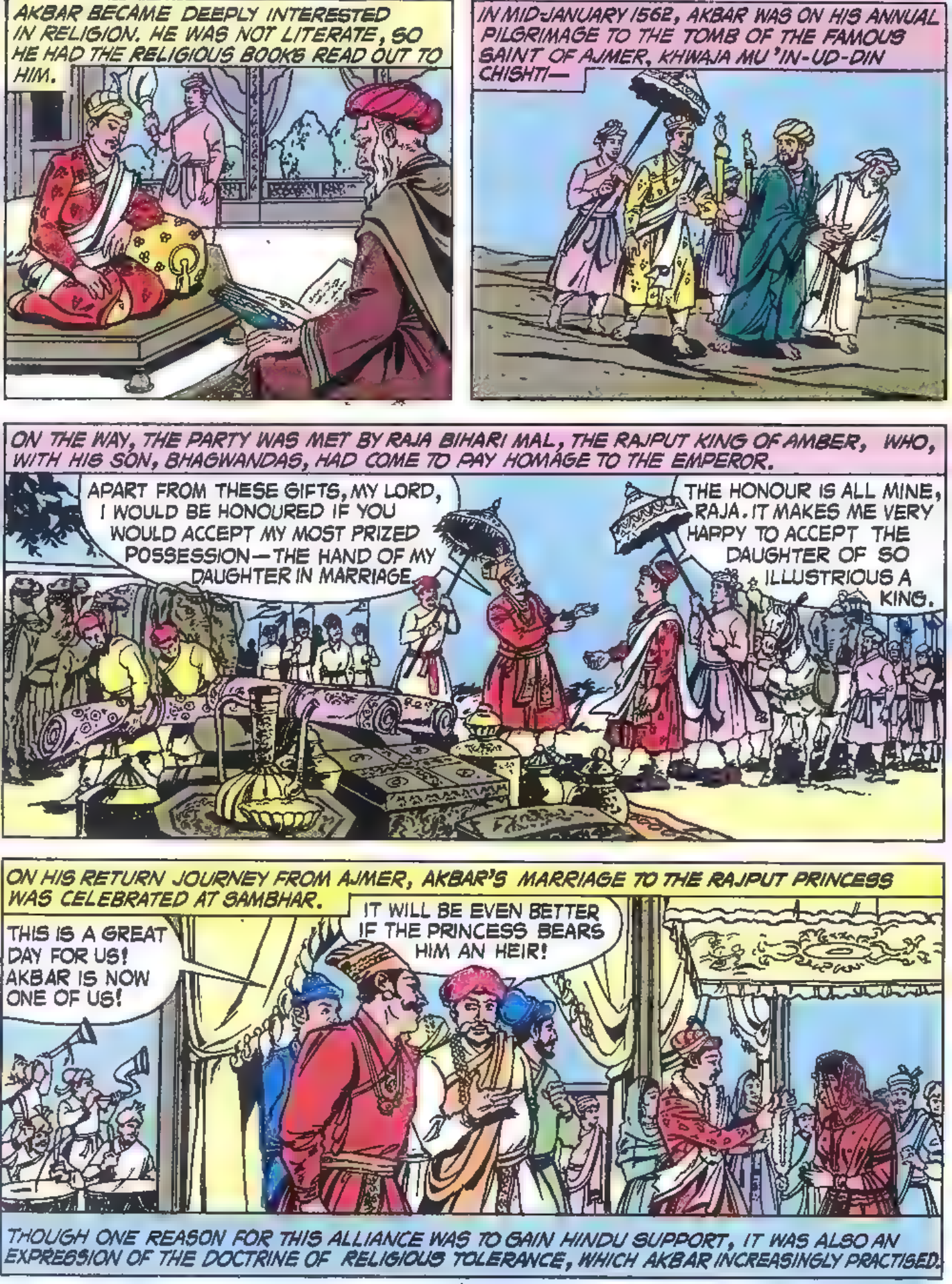
JAHANPANAH, TROUBLE IS BREWING IN THE EAST....

MAKE ARRANGEMENTS FOR A HUNTING EXPEDITION IN THE NEIGHBOURING FOREST.

AKBAR'S VERY PRESENCE ON THE SCENE OF REBELLION HAD, AS USUAL, THE DESIRED EFFECT.

NO SIGN OF ANY TROUBLE-MAKERS HERE!

NO, THEY FLED ON YOUR ARRIVAL!


AKBAR BECAME DEEPLY INTERESTED IN RELIGION. HE WAS NOT LITERATE, SO HE HAD THE RELIGIOUS BOOKS READ OUT TO HIM.
IN MID-JANUARY 1562, AKBAR WAS ON HIS ANNUAL PILGRIMAGE TO THE TOMB OF THE FAMOUS SAINT OF AJMER, KHWAJA MU'IN-UD-DIN CHISHTI—
ON THE WAY, THE PARTY WAS MET BY RAJA BIHARI MAL, THE RAJPUT KING OF AMBER, WHO, WITH HIS SON, BHAGWANDAS, HAD COME TO PAY HOMAGE TO THE EMPEROR.
APART FROM THESE GIFTS, MY LORD, I WOULD BE HONOURED IF YOU WOULD ACCEPT MY MOST PRIZED POSSESSION—THE HAND OF MY DAUGHTER IN MARRIAGE.
THE HONOUR IS ALL MINE, RAJA. IT MAKES ME VERY HAPPY TO ACCEPT THE DAUGHTER OF SO ILLUSTRIOUS A KING.
ON HIS RETURN JOURNEY FROM AJMER, AKBAR'S MARRIAGE TO THE RAJPUT PRINCESS WAS CELEBRATED AT SAMBHAR.
THIS IS A GREAT DAY FOR US! AKBAR IS NOW ONE OF US!
IT WILL BE EVEN BETTER IF THE PRINCESS BEARS HIM AN HEIR!
THOUGH ONE REASON FOR THIS ALLIANCE WAS TO GAIN HINDU SUPPORT, IT WAS ALSO AN EXPRESSION OF THE DOCTRINE OF RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE, WHICH AKBAR INCREASINGLY PRACTISED.

THE APPOINTMENT OF THE RAJPUTS, BHAGWANDAS AND MAN SINGH, WAS IN LINE WITH HIS SECULAR BELIEFS. MAN SINGH, THE GRANDSON OF THE RAJA OF AMBER, BECAME A CLOSE ASSOCIATE—

MY LORD, YOUR HINDU SUBJECTS ARE PRAISING YOU FOR ABOLISHING THE HATEFUL JIZYA* TAX.

I AM GLAD MY SUBJECTS ARE HAPPY. THEIR LOYALTY IS MORE IMPORTANT TO ME THAN THEIR FAITHS, MAN SINGH.

I WISH SOME OF YOUR MULLAS WOULD SEE IT THAT WAY TOO!

WHAT'S TO BE DONE ZEALOTS THINK THERE IS ONLY ONE PATH TO HEAVEN.

AKBAR EVEN ALLOWED HIS HINDU WIFE TO CELEBRATE HER FESTIVALS IN COURT AND JOINED IN THEM HIMSELF.

MUBARAK!

MUBARAK, RANI! HOW DOES THIS TURBAN SUIT ME?

THE ORTHODOX MULLAS HATED THE ENLIGHTENED POLICIES OF THEIR RULER ....

AKBAR HAS GIVEN UP THE TRUE RELIGION!

HE TAKES THE ADVICE OF INFIDELS!

.... THOUGH SOME OF THEM UNDERSTOOD THE REASONS FOR HIS ACTIONS.
THIS YEAR HE HAS REFUSED TO SEND MONEY TO THE POOR IN MECCA. WHAT WILL THEY THINK OF US THERE!
BUT WHY SHOULD HE SEND MONEY THERE? HE GIVES TO THE POOR IN HINDUSTAN!
WHERE IS THE NEED TO BREAK OUR TIME-HONOURED CUSTOMS?
HE WANTS TO CARRY OUT CERTAIN REFORMS....
REFORMS? WE DON'T WANT REFORMS! WHATEVER RULES WERE WRITTEN IN THE OLD DAYS— THOSE ARE SUFFICIENT FOR US!
BUT AKBAR WENT AHEAD WITH HIS LIBERAL POLICIES. SOME OF THESE AFFECTED ORTHODOX HINDUS AS WELL, SUCH AS THE ABOLITION OF SATI AND CHILD MARRIAGE.
I WOULD HAVE ARRANGED MY SON'S MARRIAGE WITH YOUR DAUGHTER. BUT AKBAR HAS DECREED AGAINST CHILD MARRIAGES!
IT REALLY IS TOO BAD THE WAY HE INTERFERES WITH OUR AGE-OLD CUSTOMS!

MOST OF THE RAJPUT PRINCES HAD BY NOW ACCEPTED AKBAR'S SUZERAINTY, BUT THE PROUD RANA OF MEWAR REFUSED TO FALL UNDER HIS SWAY. AKBAR DECIDED TO ATTACK HIM.

THE RANA'S CAPITAL FORT WILL BE OUR NEXT TARGET. HAS THE SURVEY I ORDERED OF THE AREA BEEN MADE?

YES, A FULL SURVEY HAS BEEN MADE. HERE IS THE MAP. I FIND THAT CHITTOR IS ALMOST IMPREGNABLE. IT IS BUILT ON A STEEP ROCK.

IMPREGNABLE? BUT IT WAS ONCE CAPTURED BY SULTAN BAHADUR SHAH.

IT WAS DIFFICULT THEN—AND IT WILL BE DIFFICULT NOW.

AKBAR MADE FULL PREPARATIONS, AND STARTED OUT WITH HIS ARMY. ON THE WAY—

THE RANA OF MEWAR HAS RETIRED WITH HIS FAMILY TO UDAIPUR!

WHAT! HE FLEES FROM CHITTOR BEFORE WE ARRIVE!

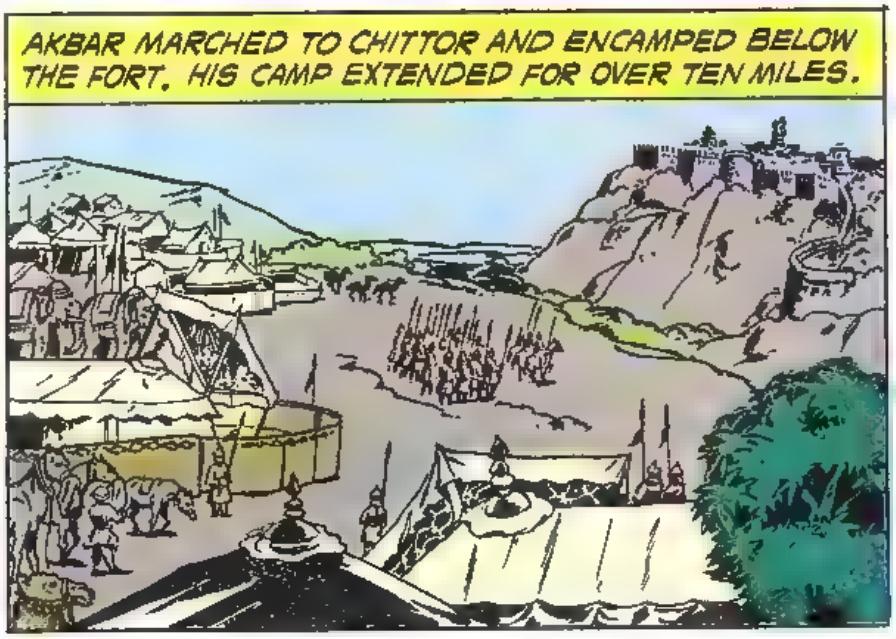
BUT HE HAS LEFT GENERAL JAIMAL IN CHARGE OF CHITTOR WITH EIGHT THOUSAND RAJPUTS.

SO HE LEAVES THEM TO DIE?

NO, MY LORD, THE FORT IS STRONG AND WELL-STOCKED WITH FOOD.
BUT THE COUNTRY AROUND HAS BEEN LAID WASTE SO THAT YOU WILL HAVE PROBLEMS GETTING SUPPLIES OF FOOD.

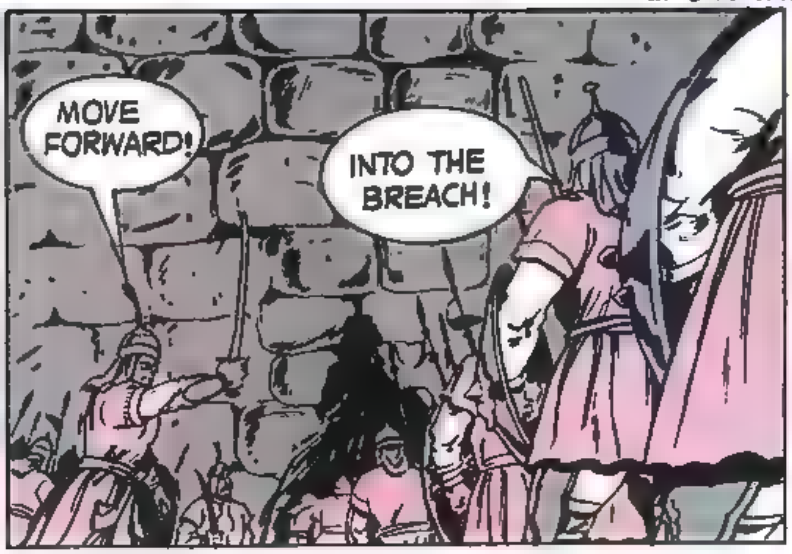
WE ARE WELL PROVIDED. YOU MAY GO. YOUR REPORT IS AS COMPLETE AS IT COULD BE.
THANK YOU, MY LORD.

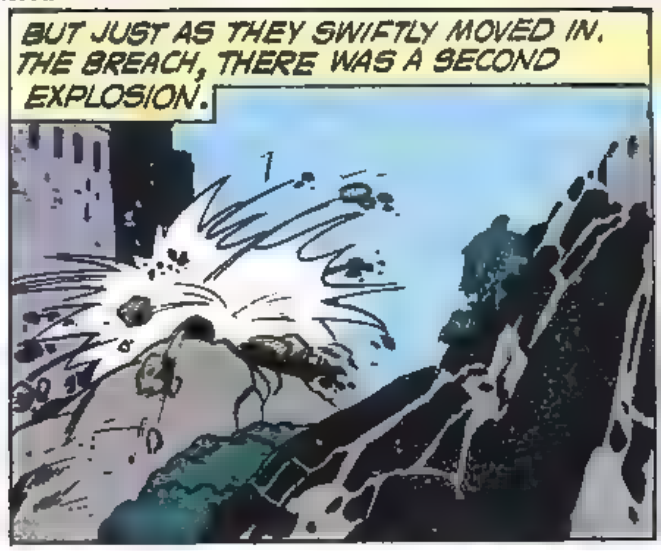
SO WE KNOW WHAT TO EXPECT. AND WE ARE PREPARED. TOMORROW WE MOVE!

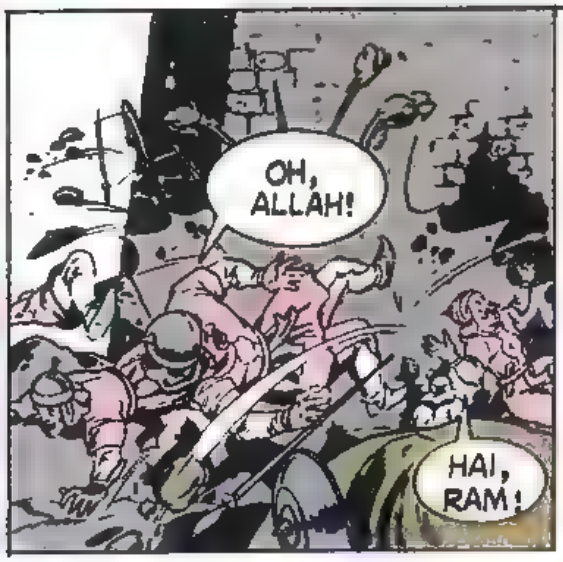

AKBAR MARCHED TO CHITTOR AND ENCAMPED BELOW THE FORT. HIS CAMP EXTENDED FOR OVER TEN MILES.

WE WILL BLAST THE WALL OF THE FORT. START DIGGING THE TUNNELS.

TWO TUNNELS CLOSE TO EACH OTHER LEADING TO THE FORT WERE BURROWED. IT TOOK ONE MONTH TO DO THIS.
BUT AT LAST THE WORK WAS COMPLETED.
MY LORD, THE TUNNELS ARE READY.
WELL DONE!
WE ARE PREPARING TO LIGHT THE FUSES.
THEY MUST EXPLODE AT THE SAME TIME. SEE TO THAT.
ALL RIGHT, READY!
BOOM

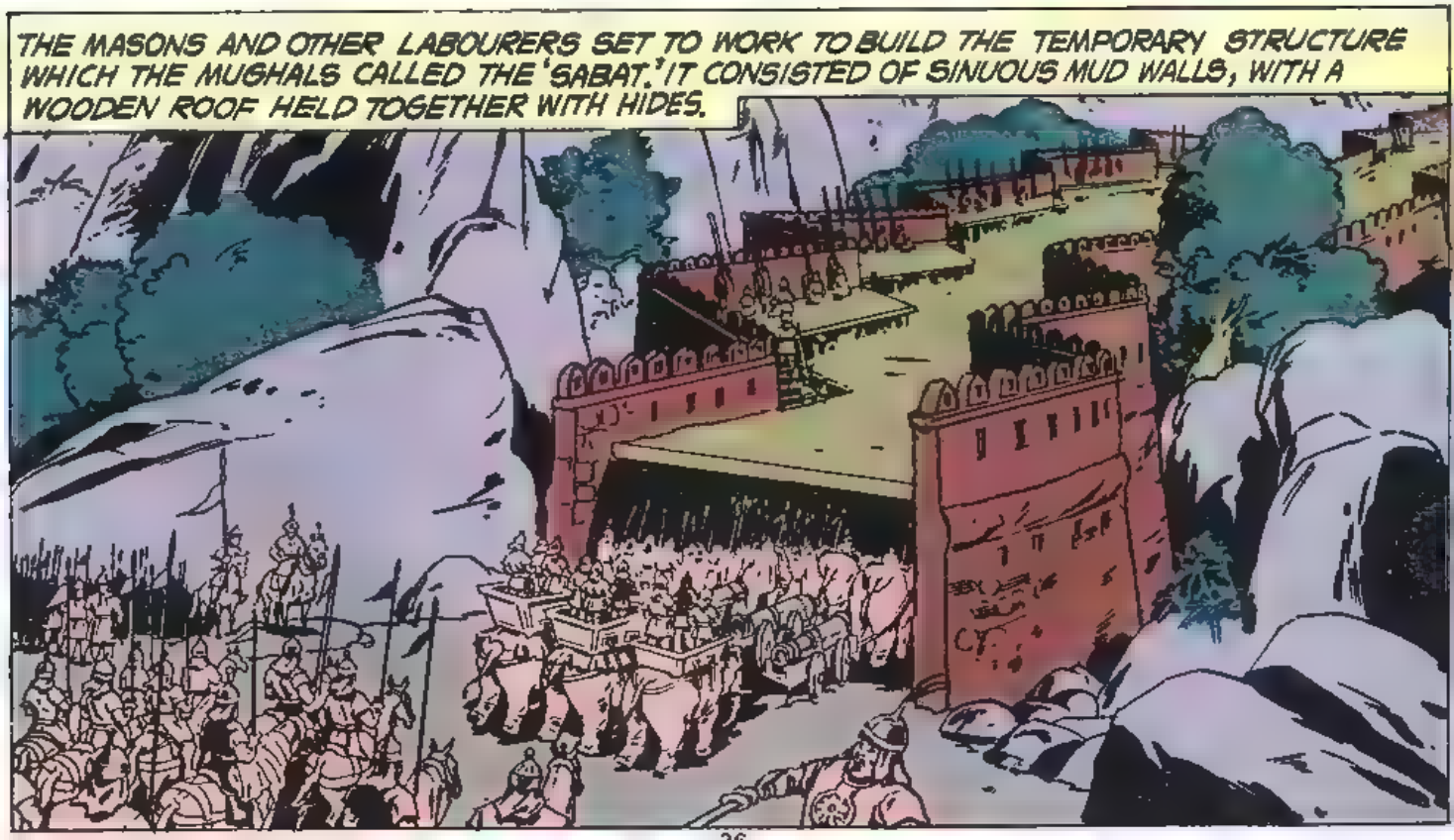

MOVE FORWARD!
INTO THE BREACH!


BUT JUST AS THEY SWIFTLY MOVED IN. THE BREACH, THERE WAS A SECOND EXPLOSION.


OH, ALLAH!
HAI, RAM!

THEY'VE BEEN CAUGHT BY THE SECOND EXPLOSION!

TWO HUNDRED SOLDIERS LOST! WE CAN'T USE TUNNELS HERE. LET'S TRY MOVING FORWARD UNDER COVER. BUILD A SABAT!


THE MASONS AND OTHER LABOURERS SET TO WORK TO BUILD THE TEMPORARY STRUCTURE WHICH THE MUGHALS CALLED THE 'SABAT.' IT CONSISTED OF SINUOUS MUD WALLS, WITH A WOODEN ROOF HELD TOGETHER WITH HIDES.

THE SABAT WAS A STEADILY GROWING FORTIFICATION. AS ITS WALLS INCHED FORWARD, THE MUGHAL GUNS, CANNONS AND MEN, COULD ADVANCE UNDER PROTECTION. BUT IT WAS DANGEROUS FOR THE WORKERS IN THE FORWARD AREA. HUNDREDS OF THEM DIED EVERY DAY, VICTIMS OF ARROWS FROM THE CHITTOR FORT.

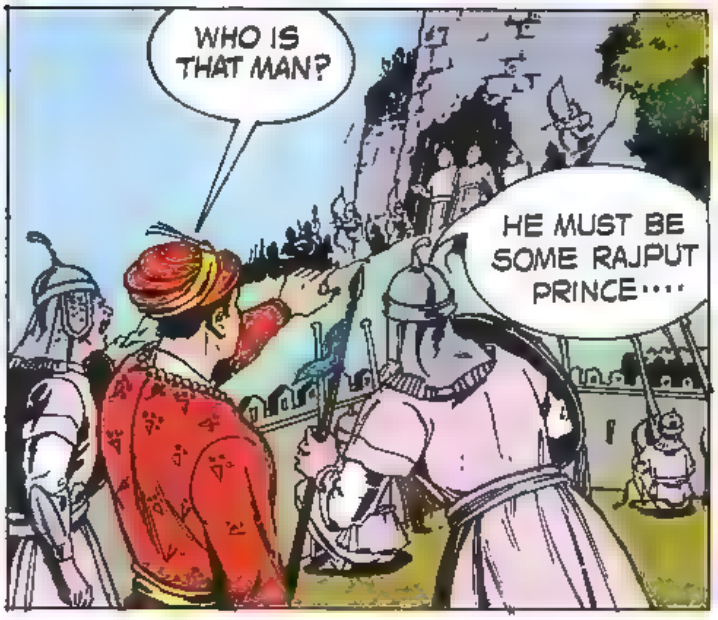
SHOOT!

SHOOT AT THOSE INTRUDING MUGHALS!

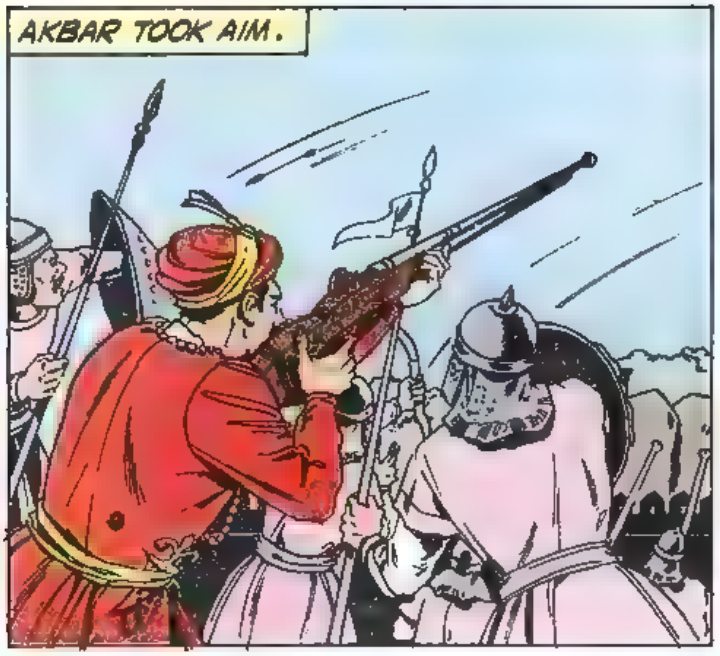
AS THEY MOVED FORWARD TO THE FOOT OF FORTRESS, THE GUNS SNIPED.

BOTH SIDES FOUGHT COURAGEOUSLY. BUT AS HE DREW NEARER THE FORT, AKBAR WAS IN A STRONGER POSITION.

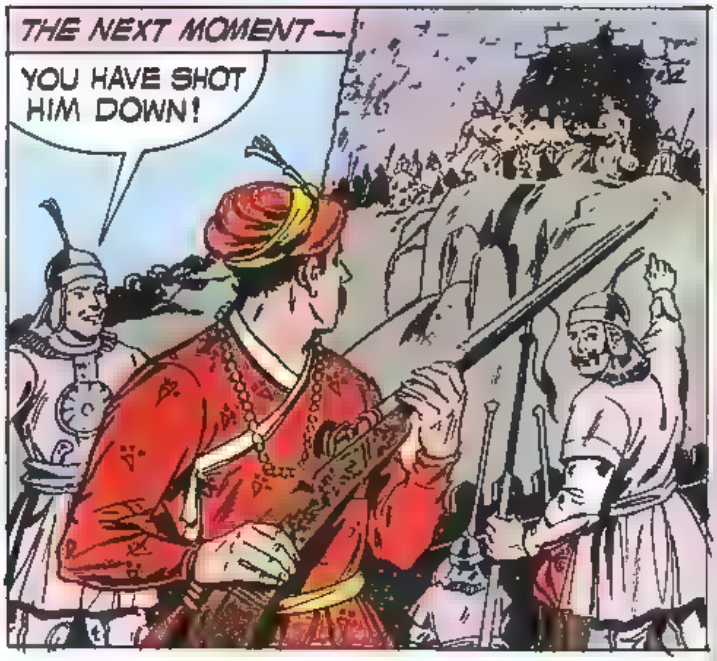
FINALLY, THINGS WERE SO BAD FOR THE ENEMY THAT THE COMMANDER, JAIMAL, HIMSELF CAME TO THE BREACH TO DEFEND IT.



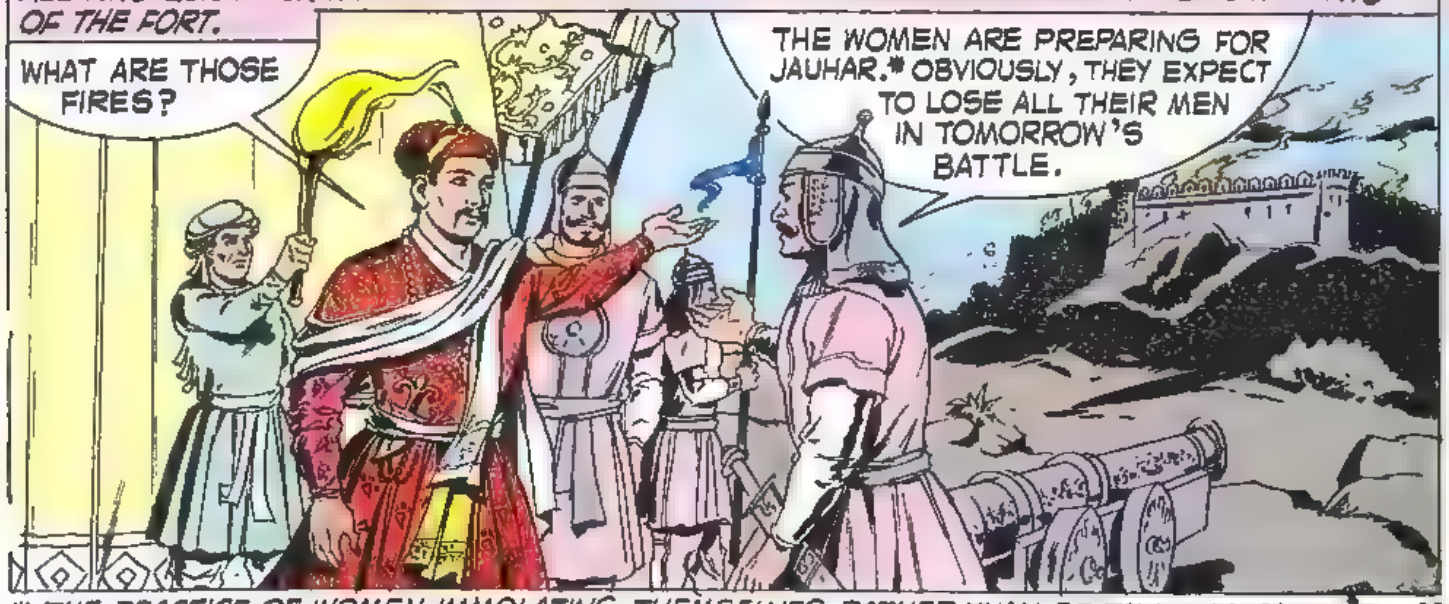
AKBAR TOOK AIM.



THE NEXT MOMENT—



ALL WAS QUIET FOR A WHILE. THEN FIRES COULD BE SEEN BURNING AT DIFFERENT PARTS OF THE FORT.



* THE PRACTICE OF WOMEN IMMOLATING THEMSELVES RATHER THAN BE TAKEN AS CAPTIVES

THEN THE MAN YOU JUST KILLED MUST HAVE BEEN THEIR COMMANDER, JAIMAL!

WELL, IT WAS TIME TO END THE BATTLE. WE HAVE BEEN FIGHTING FOR A VERY LONG TIME.

CHITTOR WAS CAPTURED, BUT THE RANA, UDAI SINGH, REFUSED TO SUBMIT. OTHER PRINCES, HOWEVER, PREFERRED TO MAKE PEACE WITH AKBAR.

THE MUGHAL COURT HAD BECOME AN IMPORTANT SEAT OF CULTURE. AKBAR ENCOURAGED MUSIC. BAZ BAHADUR * AND TANSEN MADE THEIR MARK AT THE MUGHAL COURT.

AKBAR HAD A WORKSHOP FOR ARTISTS. PERSIAN AND INDIAN ARTISTS PAINTED MINIATURES AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

'NED AKBAR'S COURT SOME YEARS AFTER HIS DEFEAT AT MALWA

HAVING ESTABLISHED HIS KINGDOM ON A FIRM FOUNDATION, AKBAR COULD NOW ENJOY THE LUXURIES OF COURT LIFE. BUT A SECRET SADNESS TROUBLED HIM.

WHAT IS THE USE OF ALL THIS...? I HAVE NO SON, NO HEIR TO CONTINUE MY WORK.

I MUST SPEAK OF MY TROUBLES TO THE GOOD MAN AT SIKRI.

AKBAR UNDERTOOK A PILGRIMAGE ON FOOT TO SHEIKH SALIM CHISHTI OF SIKRI.

I DO NOT HAVE AN HEIR! OF WHAT USE THEN IS THIS GREAT KINGDOM I HAVE BUILT?

HE WHO GIVES WITHOUT BEING ASKED, WILL BESTOW THREE SONS ON YOU, AKBAR.

THE HOLY MAN'S PROPHESY CAME TRUE THE VERY NEXT YEAR. THE RAJPUT PRINCESS OF AMBER GAVE BIRTH TO A SON. HE WAS NAMED SALIM.*

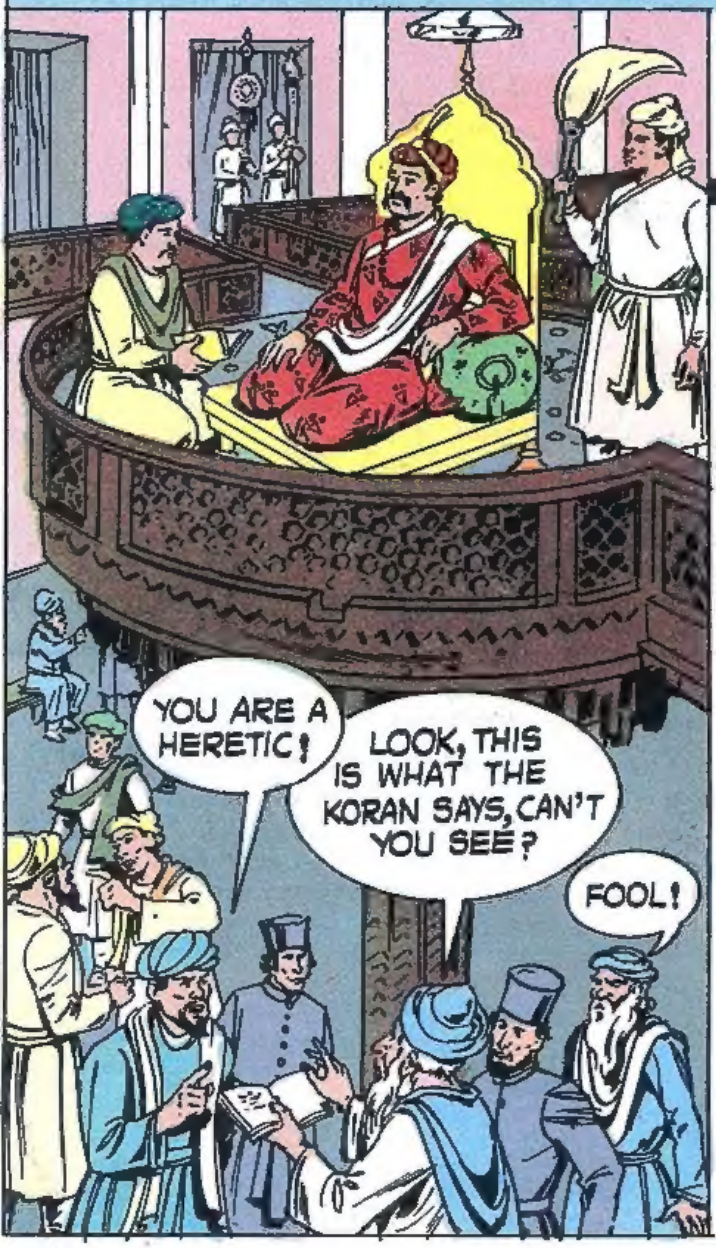
GOOD NEWS!

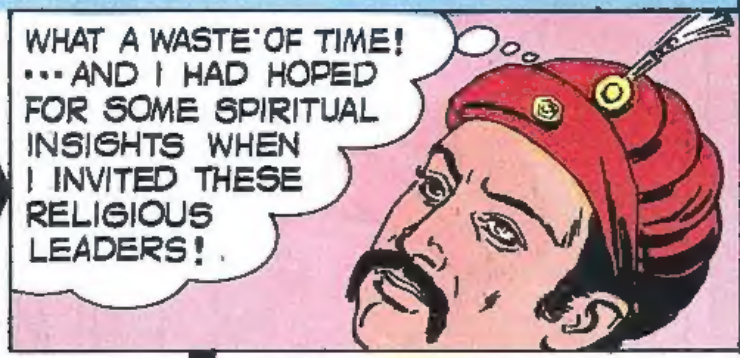
THE EMPEROR HAS A SON!

TWO MORE SONS, MURAD AND DANIYAL, WERE BORN WITHIN A FEW YEARS.

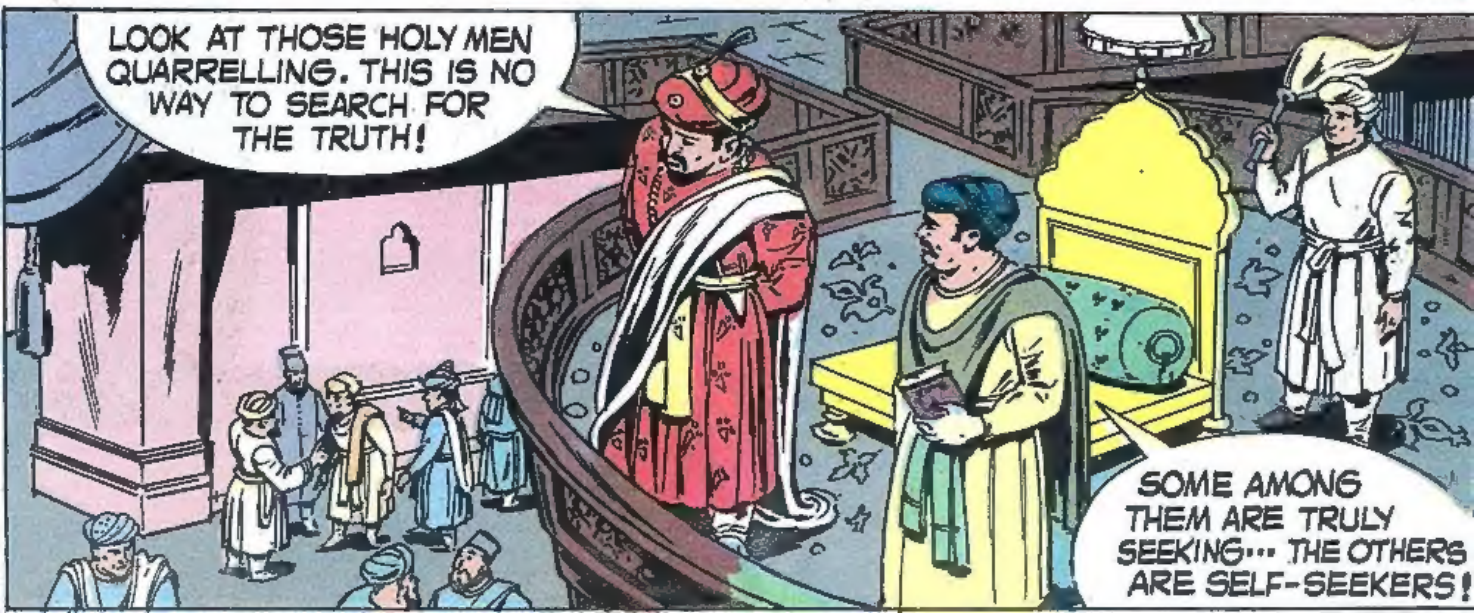
* LATER KNOWN AS THE EMPEROR JAHANGIR

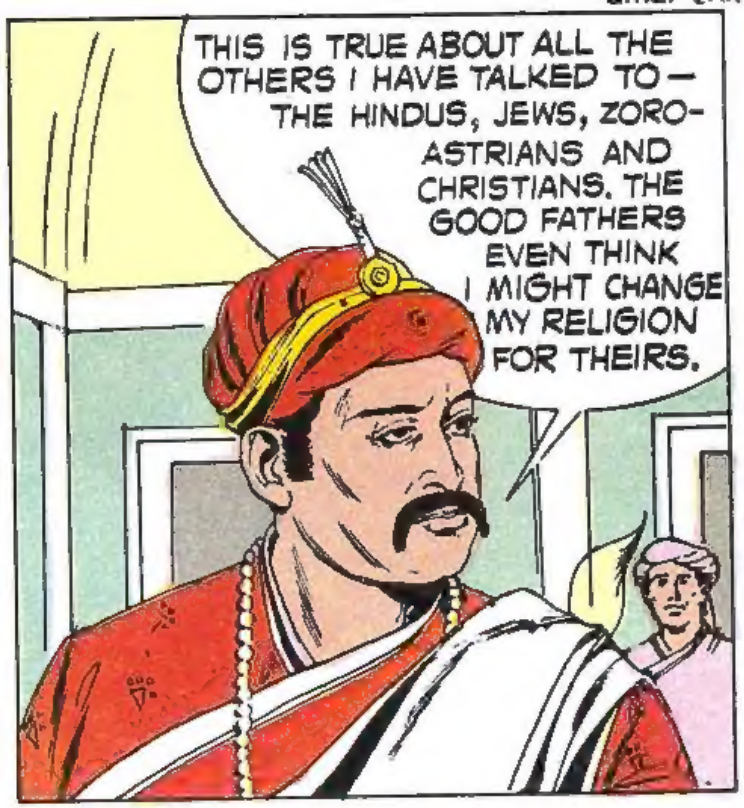
WITH THE SUCCESSION ENSURED, AKBAR TURNED HIS ATTENTION TO IMPROVING THE LOT OF THE PEOPLE. HE UNDERTOOK MANY REFORMS AND CONSOLIDATED THE EMPIRE. HE INVITED PEOPLE OF ALL RELIGIONS TO HOLD DISCUSSIONS IN HIS PALACE.





HIS FAVOURITE CONFIDANTE WAS THE SCHOLAR, ABUL FAZL.*





AKBAR'S QUEST FOR A UNIVERSAL RELIGION FOUND EXPRESSION IN DIN-I-ILAHI. DURING HIS LONG REIGN, HE TRIED TO PUT HIS IDEALS INTO PRACTICE AND CHANGE THE WORLD INTO A MORE HUMANE PLACE. WHEN HE DIED AT THE AGE OF 63, HE BEQUEATHED TO THE FUTURE HIS IDEAL OF A UNIFIED COUNTRY OF DIVERSE RELIGIONS AND CULTURES. ABOVE ALL HE IS REMEMBERED FOR HIS LOVE OF THE ARTS AND FOR HIS MAGNIFICENT ARCHITECTURE.

WHICH OF THE ACKS HAVE YOU STILL NOT READ?

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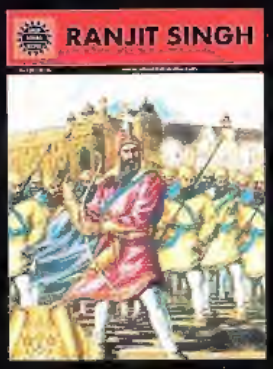
BRAVEHEARTS

AKBAR

He was a child, who only wanted to ride elephants and hunt tigers. Crowned emperor of Hindustan at the age of 13, he was mature enough to choose his friends carefully. Enemies and dangerous courtiers, on the other hand, were dispatched mercilessly. For his courage and generosity, his love of the arts and universal justice, history gave Jalaluddin Muhammad Akbar an enduring label – 'Akbar the Great'.

OTHER ACK BRAVEHEARTS:



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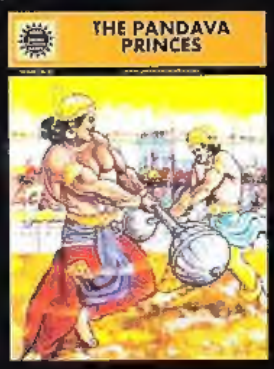

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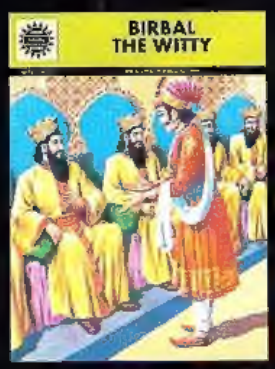

FABLES & HUMOUR

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- NARAYAN MURTHY, CHIEF MENTOR, INFOSYS

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